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HOAG. Vision in 1803.





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# THE VISION, in 1803,

OF

## JOSEPH HOAG

a recorded minister in the Society of Friends

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REPRINTED, FROM A TEXT OF 1854, WITH  
COLLATIONS AND COMMENTARY

BY

### ALBERT J. EDMUNDS

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**Behold, days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will send a famine against the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water ; but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. And they shall fluctuate as water from sea to sea, and run to and fro ; from North to East seeking the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.** (*Amos VIII, 11, 12, in the Septuagint of Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress : Hebrew, Tekoa, about B. C. 763 ; Greek, Alexandria, about B. C. 200 ; English, Philadelphia, 1808.*)

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Commentary Only

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ALBERT J. EDMUNDS\*

\*Author of *Buddhist and Christian Gospels Compared from the Originals* (Tokyo, 1905; Philadelphia, 1908-1909, with Postscripts, 1912 and 1914; Palermo, 1913.) This book has been criticized and quoted by scholars in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and other nations. Professor Richard Garbe, University of Tuebingen, has made important use thereof in his great work on the part played by India in the formation of the Christian religion. See *The Monist*, Chicago, 1911-1915, especially October, 1914. *Buddhist and Christian Gospels* is edited by Professor Anesaki, of Tokyo and Harvard Universities. The Holy Scriptures of all religions are quoted therein in heavy type like the passage from Amos on this title-page.

# JOSEPH HOAG'S VISION: 1803

Differences in the Auburn Text: 1861.

## THE NEGRO TEXT: 1854

- (1) Insert: *probably*  
(2) fields  
(3) Insert: *that*  
(4) *the brightness of its shining*  
(5) Insert: *it seemed as if*  
(6) Insert: *laid*  
(7) *that*  
(8) Insert: *the*

(9) *now follows have*

(10) Insert: *I*. [This is a good example of an important doctrine hanging upon one letter, for the introduction of the pronoun makes the Deity the author of evil. Neither the Glasgow nor the Indiana text supports this reading.]

(11) *upon*  
(12) *the effect was nearly*  
(13) *who*  
(14) *organized*  
(15) *this*  
(16) Insert: *and, as before, those who separated went with lofty looks and taunting, censuring language. Those who, etc.* [It is significant that some of the Seer's family maintained that this clause was not in the autograph.]

(17) Insert: *next*  
(18) Insert: *and*  
(19) *throughout*  
(20) Insert: *an*  
(21) *Societies* (omitting *the*)

(22) *this Power*  
(23) *will*  
(24) *their iniquity*  
(25) Insert: *down*  
(26) *burden*

(27) Insert: JOSEPH HOAG.

(28) Omit: *Copied by request, etc.*

In the year 1803, (1) in the eighth or ninth month, I was one day alone in the field, (2) and observed (3) the sun shone clear, but (3) a mist eclipsed its (4) brightness. As I reflected upon the singularity of the event, my mind was struck into a silence the most solemn I ever remember to have witnessed; for (5) all my faculties were (6) low, and unusually brought into deep silence. I said to myself, what can all this mean? I do not recollect ever before to have been sensible of such feelings. And I heard a voice from Heaven say: "This which (7) thou seest which dims the brightness of the sun is a sign of (8) present and coming times. I took the forefathers of this country from a land of oppression. I planted them here among the people of the forest. I sustained them, and while they were humble, I blessed them and fed them, and they became a numerous people; but now (9) they have become proud and lifted up, and have forgotten me who nourished them and protected them in the wilderness and are running into every abomination and evil practice of which the old countries are guilty, and (10) have taken quietude from the land, and suffered a dividing spirit to come among them. Lift up thine eyes and behold." And I saw them dividing in great heat. This division began in the Church on (11) points of doctrine. It commenced in the Presbyterian Society, and went through the various religious denominations, and in its progress and close its effects were (12) the same. Those that (13) dissented went off with high heads and taunting language; and those who kept to their original (14) sentiments appeared exercised and sorrowful; and when the (15) dividing spirit entered the Society of Friends, it raged in as high a degree as in any I had before discovered. (16) As before, those who kept to their ancient principles retired by themselves.

It (17) appeared in (8) Lodges of (8) Freemasons. (18) It broke out in appearance like a volcano, inasmuch as it set the country in an uproar for a length of time. Then it entered politics in (19) the United States, and did not stop until it produced a civil war, and (20) abundance of human blood was shed in (8) course of the combat. The Southern States lost their power and slavery was annihilated from their borders. Then a monarchical power arose—took the government of the States—established a national religion, and made all the people (21) tributary to support its expenses. I saw them take property from Friends to a large amount. I was amazed at beholding all this, and I heard a voice proclaim: "This power shall not always stand, but with it (22) I shall (23) chastise my Church until they return to the faithfulness of their forefathers. Thou seest what is coming on thy native land for its iniquities (24) and the blood of Africa, the remembrance of which has come up before me. This vision is yet for many days."

I had no idea of writing it (25) for many years, until it became such a burthen (26) that for my own relief I have written it. (27).—*Copied, by request, from Frederick Douglass's Paper* (28).

# COMMENTARY.

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The two earliest *American* printed texts are:

1. The one in *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, Rochester, N. Y., copied by *Friends' Intelligencer*, Philadelphia, Twelfth Month 2, 1854, and reprinted, at my suggestion, by the same magazine, Seventh Month 31, 1915. This I call THE NEGRO TEXT.

2. The one in the official edition of Hoag's (29) *Journal*, Auburn, 1861.

The heavy type above signifies agreement between these two. The Auburn text is inserted at the end of the *Journal* with this note: "As the subjects alluded to in the following vision are of general interest, and much expression having been given in favor of its being appended to this journal, it is concluded to do so:—" (Text follows.) The official minute of New York Yearly Meeting authorizing the publication of the *Journal* is dated from Poplar Ridge, Cayuga County, N. Y., Fifth Month 29, 1861. The *Journal* contains no title for the Vision, which it prints out of sequence with that apologetic note; but the London reprint (A. W. Bennett, 1862) adds to the title-page the words:

## Containing his Remarkable Vision.

The Negro text, as reprinted in *Friends' Intelligencer*, 1854, has for title: *Vision of JOSEPH HOAG, deceased, who was an eminent Minister of the Society of Friends*. It ends with the significant ascription of source reprinted above, thus disclaiming responsibility for publication, on the part of the Liberal Quakers who, since 1844, have conducted *Friends' Intelligencer*. Similarly, the Vision was never printed in *The Friend*, of Philadelphia (known as "The Square Friend," in honor of its shape and its orthodoxy) until 1885. Moreover, for forty years (1827-1867) there is no mention of Hoag in the indices to *The Friend*, except a brief obituary, which omits all mention of the Vision. *The next edition of the Journal ought to print this under the year 1803.*

Joseph Hoag is by no means lonesome as a Quaker prophet whose honor is problematic. Students of religion love the Society of Friends as a dream of "the lost City of God" (Rendel Harris's epithet for the Apostolic Church); but truth is forever obscured by officialism, which is the organ of the average man (30). Well has an American prophet declared:

**God is in the individual and the Devil is in the institutions.**

George Fox's *Journal* is acknowledged to be a religious classic alike by Thomas Carlyle and a bishop of Durham Cathedral. From 1694 to 1911 that *Journal* was officially garbled by the Quaker Society, and Fox was not allowed to appear as a rain-maker, a psychic healer and a seer of two spirits of executed criminals, who assured him that they were happy. My note on Fox as a rain-maker may be read in *London Notes and Queries* for June 15, 1912. The passage about the happy ghosts is dated 1650, and may be found at Vol. I, p. 14, of the *Editio Princeps* of the genuine *Journal*

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(29) The name is two syllables. In the International Alphabet it would be written *Houæg* in classical English.

(30) Bishop White, in his unpublished work on Quakerism, expressed surprise at the hierarchical power of the Elders. (See *Quaker Literature in the Libraries of Philadelphia* in *The Westonian*, Eleventh Month, 1907.) John Hoag Dillingham once said to me that an Elder was an unspiritual person who was set to keep spiritual ones in order.

(31), printed in 1911 at the University of Cambridge, by whose students, in 1655, the mystic had been mobbed.

Another garbled classic is the Journal of Thomas Shillitoe (London, 1839, 2 vols., 8vo). This worthy, who died at Tottenham in 1836, had a literary misfortune in the United States, for his Journal was at once reprinted in Philadelphia by William and Thomas Evans. Under date of January 10, 1828, they omit John Woolman's prediction that Mount Holly meeting would dwindle for drawing the color line. They suppress the remarkable address to professing Christians in 1831, wherein Shillitoe protests against their accumulating fortunes, "trying to make a heaven here below." They suppress his statement in Exeter Hall, May, 1833, that for thirty years he had been a vegetarian, and also his mild Zoroastrian and Swedenborgian belief that the Devil invented rum. (32)

The Auburn text of Hoag's Vision was dictated to his granddaughter, Narcissa Battey, some time before his death, in November, 1846, and apparently in 1845. This was because the original autograph had been lost. A Quaker attestation at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (given in full in my unpublished University lectures) carries back the knowledge of the Vision to the decade of the Twenties. Independently of the Auburn text a copy appeared at Glasgow on June 1, 1861 (*The British Friend*, Sixth Month 1, 1861). The principal differences in this text are:

1. (After Note 7). Omit: *which dims the brightness of the sun.*
2. (After Note 9). Omit: *and lifted up.*
3. (Just before Note 11). Omit: *in the Church.*
4. (Note 16). Read: *as in any I had noticed or before discovered, and, as before, those who separated went off with lofty looks and taunting, censoring language. Those who kept, etc.*
5. (Between Notes 20 and 21). Read: *sprang up*, instead of: *arose*.
6. (After Note 21). Omit: *to a large amount.*
7. (After Note 24). Quotation-marks end at: *before me*, with new paragraph following.

An Indiana text by David Marshall (Carthage, 1889) omits the phrases:

*It broke out in appearance like a volcano,*

and:

*took the government of the States.*

Apart from minor differences of wording, the important thing about this Indiana text is an extra slip of paper added after the tract was on the market. This slip quotes "some very old copies" as reading:

*Then a monarchical (sic) power arose in this government and establisht, etc.*

Lindley Murray Hoag, a son of the seer, and William H. Dean, a friend of both, have maintained that the whole passage about a monarchical government and its establisht religion was not in the autograph. (*The Friend* and *Friends' Intelligencer*, both of Philadelphia, for 1892.) Joseph Hoag had many visions, and it appears that, during the twenty years that elapsed between the vision of 1803 and the autograph, another vision had been experienced and then added to the great one.

Moreover, the last paragraph, about the committal to writing, is lacking in the Indiana text. These differences may point to a *manuscript transmission, in the Central States, from the original autograph, before the dictation to Narcissa Battey, about 1845*. My sister, Lucy Edmunds, on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, went

(31) This is not quite accurate, for the opening of the Journal is lacking in the manuscript. Consequently we shall never know exactly what Fox wrote about his early life.

(32) It is true that Zoroaster attaches a sanctity to haoma, and Swedenborg to wine; but both these prophets postulate an evil power in nature (*Vendidad I; Divine Love and Wisdom*, 338-342. Fermentation-bacteria would come under the **noxious animalcules** of No. 342.

to Nantucket in 1892 and obtained the attestation of Narcissa Battey Coffin about this dictation from her grandfather. My sister's notes and some of my own were given to John Hoag Dillingham, who meant to use them in a monograph on his kinsman. The busy life of that well-known Quaker saint prevented this. After he became editor of *The Friend*, I urged him to bring forth the matter in his paper. To this he agreed, but died in 1910 before his promise was fulfilled. (*Et servi ejus servient illi, et videbunt faciem ejus: et nomen ejus in frontibus eorum.*)

For fuller information, see the article by Thomas C. Battey in *The Friend*, Philadelphia, Eleventh Month 12, 1892.

The fact that Hoag did not write out the Vision "for many years," as he tells us himself, or "until he was an old man," as his son has told us (*The Friend*, Ninth Month 24, 1892) is very provoking. For it allows the Sadducee to say that the committal to writing was after the following items were fulfilled:

1. Cumberland Presbyterian schism, 1810.
2. Quaker schism, 1827-1829.
3. Anti-Masonic agitation following the disappearance of Morgan in 1826.

The manuscript attestation at the Historical Society, dated 1878, says that respectable Quakers voucht for the existence of the Vision for "forty to fifty-five years" before that date. Let us put beside this the statement of Lindley Murray Hoag afore-said. Now, an elderly son would hardly regard his father as "an old man" till after sixty. It is, therefore, probable that the committal to writing took place in the decade of the Twenties. The seer was born at Nine Partners, Dutchess County, N. Y., in 1762, and was sixty in 1822. It is quite possible that the Quaker schism of 1827 was the immediate incitement to write.

After my Fellowship lectures in the University of Pennsylvania, May, 1914, wherein I quoted the Vision, a challenge from sceptical scholars inquired: "Can you produce a copy older than the Civil War?"

"No."

"Very well, then; we hold that the Vision was written after the war."

By the sudden recovery of the Negro text of 1854 all this is changed. The fact remains, however, that science can only build upon the later items:

4. Civil War, 1861-1865.
5. Defeat of the South, 1865.
6. Abolition of slavery, 1865.
7. Monarchical government.
8. Establisht religion.
9. Overthrow of 7 and 8.

When these last three items are fulfilled, Hoag's Vision will rank second to none in the history of seership, and may yet be page one of some American Sibylline Leaves.

One of the best-dated visions in the Old Testament is that of the farmer Amos, **two years before the earthquake** (33), in the reign of the Judean Uzziah, a period of fifty-two years (34), in the eighth century before Christ. With the farmer of Tekoa we may confidently parallel the farmer of Charlotte, Vermont. (35)

It is not too much to affirm that if Old Testament scholars could accept the traditional facts about this American Amos, modern prophetic criticism would be revo-

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(33) Amos 1:1.

(34) II Chron. 26:3.

(35) I regret that in *History Simplified* (Philadelphia, 1914, p. 6) I have made a mistake about Hoag's residence in 1803.



lutionized (36). The theory that all prophecies are after the event would have to be abandoned. In religion, as in geology, we should become uniformitarians (allowing, of course, that some past cataclysms exceeded any present ones). Materialists would be compelled to admit a visionary power in man, capable of seeing dramatically into the future. No political guesswork by a backwoodsman (as he calls himself in his Journal) in a sect that was hostile to newspapers (37), could have hit upon all these things in 1803. Yes, 1803, for the Quaker tradition maintains that the Vision was well known to Hoag's family and friends "before any part of it was fulfilled." (38)

The untrained sceptic imagines that he can pooh-pooh cases like Hoag's by what he calls "coincidence:" millions of guesses contain one good one. But the scientific thinker knows that before he can fall back upon coincidence he has to eliminate all cases that do not conform to the prophetic type. Arranging those that do, he perceives that the coincidence is like that between flash and peal: there is a causal nexus between them. He objects to the kind of physicist who would note down all sounds that might resemble thunder, and then, when they failed to be accompanied by lightning, use them to discredit the genuine phenomenon!

William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, quotes the modern vision of Richard Maurice Bucke. (39) This was accompanied by a strong subjective light, so strong as to become objective, occupy space, and make it appear that London was in flames. Bucke himself, in his *Cosmic Consciousness* (Philadelphia, 1901) demonstrates that his experience falls into line with that of the seers of all ages. The book is rough-hewn; French and Pali words are misprinted; but scholars of the caliber (40) of James will always take account of it. It is unfortunate that the author was unacquainted with the literature of the Society of Friends. Here he would have found the same phenomena which he has gathered from Hebrew, Hindu and Catholic. Joseph Hoag's Vision fulfills all the requirements laid down by Dr. Bucke. The seer was in his prime, forty-one; leading a healthy outdoor life; profound ecstasy was accompanied by a subjective light so intense that it appeared to occupy space and **dimmed the brightness of the sun**; a Voice accompanied the light, and finally, the matter communicated had a high moral bearing, totally different from the ravings of a lunatic.

Hoag, in a prediction, delivered in 1837, of a further Quaker schism, due to the increase of snobbery and wealth, declared: "I have seen it *in that light* that never deceived me!" (41)

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(36) It is imperatively necessary to interpret ancient religious phenomena by present ones. In my forthcoming edition of the Gospel of Mark, Hoag's Vision will be reprinted as a modern oracle illustrative of Chapter XIII, and Bucke's as illustrative of I, 10, 11.

(37) George Fox's Journal, under date of 1688; Thomas Shillitoe, in 1832, objected to Sunday newspapers and news-rooms. (Philadelphia reprint of [a large part of] his Journal, in the series called *The Friends' Library*, edited by William and Thomas Evans, Philadelphia, 1839, p. 482.)

(38) Official or semi-official note by the Society of Friends to the undated reprint which is sold at their bookstore. This leaflet is poorly printed. Probably the first edition of the Vision in type that was worthy thereof was the one appended to the alleged *Vision of the World-War*, by Leo Tolstoy (Philadelphia, 1914). We must note that the expression in the Quaker leaflet, "*many years* before any part of it was fulfilled," is incorrect; for the Cumberland Presbyterian schism was in 1810, seven years after the Vision; and seven is not "many."

(39) This vision has been dramatized in *A Duet with Omar* (Philadelphia, 1913.) Sir Oliver Lodge asked for two more copies of this poem, which the "literary" reviews of the United States will not even mention.

(40) English friends will please note that this spelling is a relic of the American Revolution. Our great lexicographer, Noah Webster (1758-1843) took advantage of the temporary alienation of American thought from English obscurantism to make these reforms. See the chapter on Reformed Spelling in the Prolegomena to *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*. (This essay is in the Philadelphia edition only. It is not to be found in those of Tokyo and Palermo.)

(41) *The Friend*, Philadelphia, Tenth Month 31, 1885. These words are not in the Journal. They are also ascribed to James Dickinson in the seventeenth century. (*Annual Monitor* for 1816.) They certainly refer to Bucke's "Brahmic Splendor." The Buddhist Scriptures also have a technical name for this light. See note in *A Duet with Omar*, p. 29.

Another point to be noticed is the fact that Hoag uses the past tense just as the Old Testament prophets do. In 1803 he can say that the Southern States *lost* their power: the event had already happened in the ideal world.

A point yet to be settled by psychical science is: *How far ahead did the Hebrew prophets see?* It is certain that they did not see into our own times, for they could not have mist so portentous a phenomenon as airships dropping frightful explosives on a city bigger than Babylon. It is premature to discuss the subject now, but we may hazard the guess that science will finally admit that they did discern the giant figure of Jesus Christ.

#### FINAL NOTE.

I have failed to find a copy of *Frederick Douglass's Paper*. The only complete file was burnt with his house at Rochester. I also apologize for the spice of advertisement herein. It is a military necessity, especially now that the world-war has stopt the wheels of international literature.

My hope is that the present research will stimulate the thinkers of the Society of Friends to hunt out old copies of the Vision and then have the whole matter investigated by some wealthy scholar who will command their respect.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, August, 1915.

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The vision, in 1803, of Joseph Hoag ...



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